



**EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION ON STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:  
THE CASE OF ETHIO TELECOM**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
& ECONOMICS, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

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## Declaration

I, Muhaba Hussien, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “*Effect of communication in strategic plan implementation: The case of ethio telecom*” is my own original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged, and that this document has not been submitted for a degree in any other universities.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “*Effect of Communication in Strategic Plan Implementation (The case of ethio telecom)*” was carried out by Muhaba Hussien under the supervision of Yohannes Workaferahu (Ph.D) submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration complies with the regulations of the University.

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of employee communication in strategy implementation in the case of ethio telecom. The study is of key importance to ethio telecom and other firms in terms of determining the effect of employee communication in strategic plan implementation. Cross-sectional survey design was used to quantitatively analyze the relationship between the study variables of employee communication and strategy implementation. The primary data was collocated through self-administered structured questioner. Population of the study has encompassed ethio telecom staffs working in corporate offices. The population size was 6392 employees, working under 22 divisions. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size calculation method with 95% confidence level and  $P = .5$ , the study sample was 376 employees. The allocation of the sample size was done in proportion to the number of employees and their job level (staff, supervisor, director, chief officer) in each division. Accordingly, the study used stratified random sampling technique, in order to accommodate the views of employees in different job positions across all divisions. The data collected from a self-designed structured questionnaire was summarized and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools like frequency distribution, mean and standard deviations were used to describe the general information about the respondents' demographic information and further explain the type of communication and the influential form of communication used in the implementation of a strategic plan. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were employed to test the correlation and cause and effect relationships of the independent variable (employee communication) with the dependent variable i.e., strategy implementation. The findings of the study showed that employee communication had positive and statistically significant role on strategy implementation and the vertical (Upward and Downward) communication flow was widely used for communicating strategy implementation information. The study also found out that the influential type of communication for strategy implementation was the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy via e-mail (written) followed by meeting sessions. The study recommended the further use of diagonal and horizontal flow of information to enhance easier flow of strategy implementation information and to circumvent the vertical hierarchy and expedite action. The use of informal communication with management's knowledge and support needs to be encouraged for the communication of strategy implementation information.*

*Key words: Employee Communication, Strategy Implementation, ethio telecom*

## **Table of Contents**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	vi
List of Tables .....	x
List of Figures .....	xi
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Background of the Study .....	1
1.2. Background of the Company .....	3
1.3. Statement of the Problem .....	4
1.4. Research Question .....	6
1.5. Objectives of the Study .....	6
1.5.1. General Objective .....	6
1.5.2. Specific Objective .....	6
1.6. Scope of the Study .....	6
1.7. Limitation of the Study .....	6
1.8. Definition of Terms .....	7
1.9. Significance of the Study .....	7
1.10. Organization of the Paper .....	8
CHAPTER TWO .....	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9
Introduction .....	9
2.1 Theoretical Review .....	9
2.1.1 Organizational strategy .....	9

2.1.2	Strategy Implementation.....	10
2.1.3	Communication.....	13
2.1.4	Role of communication in strategy implementation.....	16
2.2	Empirical Review.....	18
2.3	Hypothesis of the Study .....	20
2.4	Conceptual framework .....	20
CHAPTER THREE .....		25
3.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	25
3.1	Research Design.....	25
3.2	Target Population .....	25
3.3	Sample size and Sampling Techniques .....	26
3.4	Data Source and Collection Instruments.....	27
3.5	Methods of Data Analysis .....	27
3.6	Validity, and Reliability .....	28
3.6.1	Validity .....	28
3.6.2	Reliability.....	28
3.7	Ethical Consideration .....	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....		30
4.	DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION .....	30
4.1	Introduction .....	30
4.2	Sample and Response rate.....	30
4.3	Demographic Composition of Respondents.....	30
4.4	Descriptive Statistics of Variables .....	32
4.4.1	Type of Communication .....	32
4.4.2	Influential Communication .....	37

4.4.3	Employee Communication.....	40
4.4.4	Strategy Implementation.....	42
4.5	Reliability.....	46
4.6	Correlation Analysis.....	46
4.7	Test for Assumptions of Classical Linear Regression Model.....	47
4.7.1	Test for Linearity.....	47
4.7.2	Test for Normality.....	48
4.7.3	Test for Homoscedasticity.....	49
4.7.4	Test for Autocorrelation.....	49
4.8	Standard Regression.....	50
4.8.1	Regression model specification.....	51
4.8.2	Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or F-Test.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.8.3	Coefficients of Variables.....	51
4.9	Results and Hypothesis testing.....	52
4.10	Discussion.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE.....		55
5.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	55
5.1	Summary of Findings.....	55
5.2	Conclusion.....	56
5.3	Recommendation.....	56
REFERENCE.....		57
Appendix: Questionnaire.....		64

## List of Tables

<b>Table 2.1:</b> Strategy implementation framework.....	22
<b>Table 3.1:</b> Proportion of sample distribution .....	26
<b>Table 3.2:</b> Reliability Analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha).....	28
<b>Table 4.1:</b> Analysis of Demographic Data.....	30
<b>Table 4.2:</b> Summary of descriptive statistics of variables.....	32
<b>Table 4.3</b> Descriptive statistics of “Type of Communication” variable .....	33
<b>Table 4.4</b> Frequency table for item TC_5 .....	34
<b>Table 4.5</b> Frequency table for item TC_1 .....	34
<b>Table 4.6</b> Frequency table for item TC_6 .....	35
<b>Table 4.7:</b> Frequency table for item TC_8.....	36
<b>Table 4.8</b> Frequency table for item TC_11 .....	36
<b>Table 4.9</b> Descriptive statistics of “Influential communication” variable .....	37
<b>Table 4.10</b> Frequency table for item IC_1 .....	38
<b>Table 4.11</b> Frequency table for item IC_2 .....	38
<b>Table 4.12:</b> Frequency table for item IC_10 .....	39
<b>Table 4.13:</b> Frequency table for item IC_6 .....	39
<b>Table 4.14:</b> Descriptive statistics of “Employee Communication” variable.....	40
<b>Table 4.15:</b> Descriptive statistics of “Strategy Implementation” variable.....	43
<b>Table 4.16:</b> Frequency table for item SI_4.....	44
<b>Table 4.17:</b> Frequency table for item SI_11.....	45
<b>Table 4.18:</b> Reliability Analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha).....	46
<b>Table 4.19:</b> Pearson Correlation Matrix .....	47
<b>Table 4.20:</b> Regression analysis model summary .....	51
<b>Table 4.21:</b> ANOVA table .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Table 4.22:</b> Coefficients of variables .....	51

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 2.1:</b> Strategy implementation framework.....	21
<b>Figure 2.2:</b> Strategy implementation framework.....	24
<b>Figure 2.3:</b> Conceptual Framework of the study.....	24
<b>Figure 4.1:</b> Linearity test graph.....	48
<b>Figure 4.2:</b> Normality test plot.....	48
<b>Figure 4.3:</b> Test of Homoscedasticity .....	49

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Studies show that large number of organizations fail during implementation of their strategies. According to Niven (2008) after citing a 1999 fortune magazine article, states that 70 % of CEOs fail due of poor strategy implementation but not because of poor strategy. Niven (2008) reinforces the idea by referring to a study of Center for Creative Leadership published on 2005 Harvard business review, which shows that 40 % of CEOs fail in their first 18 months.

A strategy is the identification of long-term goals and objectives of an organization and the implementation of courses of action by the deployment of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Chandler, 1962). According to Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2009, p.3) strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, to get advantage over its competitors in a dynamic environment through alignment of organizational resources and competences, to meet expectations of its stakeholders.

According to Hunger, Hoffman, and Wheelen (2017) strategy implementation is a process by which strategies and policies are put into place through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures.

The execution of a strategy is an essential complement to its formulation. If a company's best-developed plan isn't adequately implemented, it loses its worth. Successful strategy execution, according to Hrebiniak (2013), is more difficult and challenging than strategy formulation and planning.

In the view of Muller (2004) communication affects strategy execution directly through its effect on the individuals involved in execution, the resources required, the infrastructural orientation of the organization and the process of monitoring and evaluation among other key components.

According to Kraaijenbrink (2015), the most significant problems that organizations face during strategy execution are surprisingly stable over time, these problems in the past three decades boil down to a list of twenty. In this list “Unclear communication” and “No or insufficient communication” are identified as the top two key problems in strategy execution.

Good strategy formulation does not add value to the organization if it is not followed by successfully implementation of it. In order to do so employees, need to be communicated to

ensure that they are aware of what is expected of them for the success of strategy implementation (Van Buul, 2010).

Kotter and Schlesinger (2008, pp.3-9) argue that in most organizations, leadership pursue organizational strategy implementation and do not realize the importance of the human element as a success factor for the strategy execution. Thus, this leads to failure of the strategy initiatives, as the strategy is being implemented by people who need to be made aware of the change, buy-in the change and understand their role in the strategy implementation.

While having different business strategies due to varying industries, company sizes and goals, what all companies have in common is the need to thoroughly communicate their business strategy to their employees (Hrebiniak, 2005). According to Guth and Macmillan effectively communicating the company business strategy to employees is vital to ensuring that each member of your staff is involved and understands the company goals, where your long-term plans will lead you in the future, and how you intend to get there (2006, pp. 313-327). Heide et al. (2002) explain that one of the most common weaknesses troubling businesses is employees lacking good understanding of their company's strategy. The best employees are those who are motivated, self-managed and properly trained, but this cannot be accomplished unless employees are kept in the know as much as possible (2009, pp. 217-231). Beyond communicating the overall business strategy to employees, it is equally important to communicate to them how their work will play a vital role in the overall success of the company (Jones, 2008).

According to Cater and Pucko (2010) poor communication of strategy to lower levels was the second highly rated obstacle next to rewarding system that affect strategy implementations.

Ethio telecom has embarked on the implementation of a three years' strategic plan since July, 2019, having the acronym BRIDGE, which is a short for the strategic focus areas of ensuring best customer experience, building reputable brand, providing innovative products and services, developing people oriented learning organization, growing in financial capacity, and bringing excellence in operations. Ethio telecom's BRIDGE strategy is part of the maneuver to become a preferred company by its customers, partners and stakeholders by managing its manpower, knowledge and resources.

This BRIDGE strategy symbolizes progress, connections and stability, like the bridge in real life, it is viewed as way to reach a destination and a way to overcome obstacles (ethio telecom's internal communication magazine, 2019/20).

Each functional Division in ethio telecom cascades the strategic plan and prepare its own strategy, that aligns with the overall corporate strategy. While cascading the strategy down in the organization, each level of the management establishes goals with timetables, and develop measurements that the employees understand and mutually agree on it (Daniel, 2017).

For a successful implementation of a strategy, employees must understand and buy in the organizational strategy, as well as their role (Kesho, 2022). To this end employee communication will have a vital importance in order to align employees to the business strategy. Employees need to have a clear vision of what they do and how it helps to achieve strategic goals and objectives of the organization.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of employee communication in the implementation of strategic plan in the case of ethio telecom.

## **1.2. Background of the Company**

Ethio Telecom is the oldest a state owned telecom operator in Africa. Telecommunications services were started in Ethiopia in 1894, just seventeen years after its invention. The current ethio telecom, was reorganized in 1952 as Imperial Board of Telecommunications of Ethiopia (IBTE) and later changed to "Ethiopian Telecommunications Services" (ETS) after twenty years. Since then, it has undergone restructurings and assumed different names from "Ethiopian Telecommunications Authority" (ETA) in 1975 to "Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation" (ETC) in 1996 and recently to "ethio telecom" in the year 2010 (Ethio telecom's website, 2021).

As part of Ethiopian government's second Growth and Transformation Program which focused on the improvement of telecommunication services, ethio telecom was born on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010, to support the steady economic growth and development of the country (Ethio telecom's website, June 2021).

Ethio telecom is a large state owned company having 22 functional divisions in its organizational structure. Currently (as of June, 2020), Ethio Telecom has a total of 36,465 employees of which 16,506 are permanent and the rest 19,959 are contract.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

A company's ability to implement its strategy successfully is a result of its ability to overcome obstacles leading to poor strategy implementation (Pella et al., 2013). Although formulating a consistent strategy is a difficult task, implementing the strategy throughout the organization is even more challenging (Hrebiniak, 2013). In contrast to strategy formulation, which often involves higher and middle level management, strategy implementation in companies faces variety of obstacles as it involves the entire human resource of the company (Li, Qian, & Qian, 2014). Being a companywide endeavor, strategic plan needs to be well communicated to all employees involved in its implementation so that they fulfill their part in realization of organizational strategy.

In a study carried out by Cândido and Santos (2015) on the subject of strategy implementation failure rates, they found out that the range of failure estimates is incredibly wide, spanning from a rate as low as 15 to one as high as 90 percent. The study concludes that determining the failure rates with certainty might be difficult, as it needs in depth understanding of contextual and environmental factors of the organizations.

Studies show that most organizations fail to turn the strategies into actions despite having a well formulated strategy. A number of factors can potentially affect the process by which strategic plans are turned into implementable actions. According to Kraaijenbrink (2015), poor communication expressed in terms of vagueness, lack or absence of communication is among the top strategy implementation problems that lead to poor execution. In view of Muller (2004), communication affects strategy implementation directly through its effect on the individuals involved in implementation, the resources required, the infrastructural orientation of the organization and the process of monitoring and evaluation among other key components.

According to Yang, Sun, and Eppler (2008), a well communicated strategy to all stakeholders prior to its implementation always reduces the level of resistance among employees during strategy implementation. Clearly communicated strategy increases the level of strategy ownership among employees hence boosts its implementation.

According to Miller (1997), successful strategy implementation constitutes timely completion of the plan within the specified time period, accomplishment of the desired performance and acceptability of the results and way of implementation within the company. This is a simple definition but still consistent with the three features of a successful implementation as defined by Miller (1997, p.583): (1) *completion* of everything intended to be implemented within the expected time period; (2) *achievement* of the performance intended; and (3) *acceptability* of the method of implementation and outcomes within the organization. This can be exhibited by the performance indexes disclosed in ethio telecoms 2019/20 and 2020/21 annual business performance reports.

According to the 2019/20 annual business performance report, ethio telecom was able to generate 47.7 Billion birr revenue which is 105.1% of its plan. With regard to foreign currency ethio telecom has earned 147.7 million USD from foreign exchange services, which is 107% of the plan. In the same year the total number of customers reached 46.2 million, showing an increase of 5.8% compared to the end of the previous fiscal year. The number of broadband customers also increased by 135% owing to network upgrades and introduced higher tariff reductions. The 2020/21 annual business performance report also shows that the ethio telecom has generated 56.5 Billion Birr exceeding its target plan (101.7%), and has increased its customer base to 56.2 Million subscribers. As a result, the overall strategy implementation can be safely regarded as a success.

Despite the abysmal strategy implementation success rate figures mentioned in Cândido and Santos's literature review (2015), ethio telecom was successful in implementing its three-years' BRIDGE strategy.

Lack or absence of clear communication is usually identified, as one among the most significant problems faced during strategy execution (Kraaijenbrink, 2015). In spite of its importance there is no research work conducted on the effect of employee communication on strategy implementation in the context of ethio telecom. Accordingly, this study is aimed at filling the research gap through investigating the role of employee communication in the execution of ethio telecom's BRIDGE strategic plan.

#### **1.4. Research Question**

This research is carried out to assess the role of employee communication in the implementation of strategic plan in the case of ethio telecom.

This research answered the following basic questions in the context of ethio telecom

1. Is there statistically significant relationship between employee communication and strategy implementation?
2. What are the types of employee communications used in strategy implementation?
3. Which type of communication is more influential in strategy implementation?

#### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

##### **1.5.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to determine the role of employee communication in the implementation of a strategic plan in ethio telecom.

##### **1.5.2. Specific Objectives**

The following are specific objectives of the study:

- To investigate the relationship between employee communication and the implementation of a strategy.
- To identify the types of communication used in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- To investigate the influential form of communication used in strategy implementation.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

To scope of the study was examining the relationship between the employee communication and strategic plan implementation in the case of ethio telecom. In addition to that the study further tried to investigate the type of communication and the influential form of communication that is used to disseminate strategy implementation information. The primary data was collected from 367 ethio telecom employees working in corporate offices based in Addis Ababa in the month of February, 2022.

#### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

The study was carried out to investigate the role of employee communication on strategy implementation in the case of ethio telecom. Ethio telecom is a huge company having presence in every corner of the country and hiring over 31,000 employees (Wikipedia contributors, 2022).

Due to time and cost constraint the research could not include employees working in Zonal and Regional offices.

Since the study was delimited to employees working under corporate offices, the results cannot be generalized to the whole of the company. In addition to employee communication, strategy implementation is affected by several factors such as organizational structure, organizational culture, leadership, resource allocation and others (Obeidat et al., 2017). However, the study was focused on examining the role of employee communication in strategy implementation excluding other variables. Thus, the results of the study should be interpreted considering the above mentioned limitations.

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

The study is of key importance to ethio telecom, other organizations, stakeholders, policy makers, and academicians to draw practical implications of communication on strategic plan implementation.

- ✓ The findings of this study will help ethio telecom's management to understand the significance of employee communication in implementing organizational strategies and provide a better understanding of how the company can successfully implement its strategy.
- ✓ The research will provide recommendations to other organizations on how to improve on employee communication practices for better strategy implementation
- ✓ This study will serve as an important source of information to stakeholders and policy makers. It provides valuable information in filling the gap between strategy formulation and implementation.
- ✓ The findings will provide information to academicians who might need to research further, on strategy execution and employee communication in future.

### **1.9. Definition of Terms**

**Strategic Plan.** These are the actions and direction taken by organizations to achievement goals and objectives (Hrebiniak, 2005).

**Strategy Implementation.** It is the conversion of a selected strategy into action so as to effectively implement the activities needed to attain strategic organizational goals and objectives (Dyer et al., 2020).

**Communication.** It is a transfer of meaning and understanding of meaning to others so that people who receive information understand the purpose of the information (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

**Role of communication.** Role of communication indicates the purpose of the communication. Communication has been defined simply as the process of sending and receiving messages, but the role of communication is often described as either a transmission process or a constitutive process (Adler, Rosenfeld & Ii, 2017; Zaremba, 2010).

**Types of Communication.** The structure of communication strategies used for transforming its strategic plan into actions and making the plans a reality (Carl & Vickers-Koch, 1995).

#### **1.10. Organization of the Paper**

The study is organized under five chapters. The introductory part bears background information, Statement of the problem, Research question, objectives, Significance of the study, definition of terms and organization of the paper. The second chapter deals with review of related literature, the third chapter deals with methodology that was used to conduct the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the respondents wherein the data gathered was analyzed and interpreted. Finally, the last chapter generalizes and recommends possible solutions to the research problem.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter covers the literature review which provides more insight and understanding of strategy, strategy implementation, communication and role of employee communication on strategy implementation. Conceptual framework that is applicable to the study of the role of employee communication on the implementation of strategic plan is covered in this chapter.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

##### **2.1.1 Organizational strategy**

According to Coulter (2012) strategy is a goal based plan and action of an organization that fits its capabilities and resources with the opportunities and threats in its environment. This definition of strategy mentions that strategy is based on organization's goals, meaning the chosen strategy must help the organization achieve its goals. It also describes that having a goal-directed strategy isn't enough unless it's followed by a goal-directed actions that is, implementing the strategy. In other words, an organization's strategy involves what the organization wants to accomplish and the execution of it. The definition underlines that organizational strategies should take into account its key internal strengths and external opportunities and threats.

Porter while explaining sources of a firm's success emphasizes that it is important to have a consistent set of goals and policies that fits the company's strengths and weaknesses with the industry opportunities and threats. In this context he describes strategy as an "act of aligning a company and its environment. That environment, as well as the firm's own capabilities are subject to change. Thus the task of strategy is to maintain a dynamic, not a static balance." (1991, p. 97)

Andrews defines strategy as "...pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and noneconomic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities." (1987, p.13)

Mintzberg (2013), points out that people use strategy in several ways that can be summarized in four words all starting with letter “P”, Plan, Pattern, Position and Perspective; later he added Ploy as a fifth “P”. Accordingly, strategy is described as a plan to mean a direction or a path to get from the current state to the future; as a pattern to mean uniformity in behavior over time in one market segment; as a position to refer decisions to offer particular products or services in particular markets; as perspective to indicate vision and direction and finally as a ploy, a maneuver intended to outwit a competitor.

In the view of Hatten and Schendel (1978), strategy is the basic goals and objectives of the organization, the major programs of action chosen to reach these goals and objectives, and the major pattern of resource allocation used to relate the organization to its environment. Chandler (1962), describes strategy as the identification of firm’s long-term goals and objectives, and taking courses of actions by assigning resources necessary for the achievement these goals.

A company’s strategy is the coordinated set of actions that its managers take in order to outperform the company’s competitors and achieve superior profitability (Jr et al., 2019). Jr et al further explain that the objective of a well- designed strategy is not to gain a short term success and profits, rather it is aimed at ensuring sustainable success that supports the growth of the company in the long run (Jr et al., 2019).

### **2.1.2 Strategy Implementation**

According to Dyer et al (2020) strategy implementation is the conversion of a selected strategy into action so as to effectively implement the activities needed to attain strategic organizational goals and objectives.

As for Noble (1999), strategy implementation is the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans. For Wheelen and Hunger (2012), implementing a strategy involves taking ideas, decisions, plans, policies, objectives and other aspects of the chosen strategy and implementing them into action.

Dess et al (2018) citing Kaplan and Norton (2008) states that strategy implementation involves ensuring proper strategic controls and organizational designs, which includes establishing effective means to coordinate and integrate activities within the firm as well as with its suppliers, customers, and alliance partners.

Strategy implementation is an iterative process of implementing strategies, policies, programs and action plans that allows a firm to utilize its resources to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment (Harrington, 2006). Implementation is the actions initiated within the organization and its relationships with external constituencies to realize the strategy (Homburg et al, 2004).

Eccles defined Strategy implementation as “the action that moves the organization along its choice of route towards its goal – the fulfilment of its mission, the achievement of its vision” so in brief, “strategy implementation is the realization of intentions” (1994, p. 10).

Strategy implementation is therefore concerned with putting strategy into practice and can be described as the execution of tactics so that the company moves in the desired strategic direction (Giles 1991).

In this research, strategy implementation was considered as a blend of the complementary definitions of Dyer et al (2020) and Noble (1999). Accordingly, strategy implementation is the conversion of a selected strategy into action so as to effectively implement the activities needed to attain strategic organizational goals and objectives, through the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans.

### **2.1.3 Factors affecting Strategy implementation**

Many factors influence strategy execution, including organizational structure, control systems, strategic consensus, and leadership (Noble, 1999). Okomus (2003) classified eleven factors that influence strategy execution into four categories based on their importance and characteristics. The first is strategic content aspects, which involves strategy formulation. The second group of components is strategic context factors, which are separated into external and internal contexts; the former comprises environmental unpredictability, while the latter includes organizational structure, culture, and leadership. The operational process factors, which comprise operational planning, resource allocation, people, communication, and control, are the third group. The outcome is the final category, and it includes the outcomes of the implementation phase.

Furthermore, Alamsjah (2011), Jiang and Carpenter (2013) identified the following dimensions as important in strategy implementation: degree of uncertainty, strategy clarity, organizational structure, corporate culture, CEO and top management involvement, people's competencies and

commitment, knowledge management, managing change, performance management, communication, and implementation plan.

Skivington and Daft (1991) divide strategy implementation variables into two dimensions: the framework of the organization, which is represented by its rules and resources, and the process of the organization, which is represented by interactions, meanings, and sanctions. Noble (1999) analyzes strategy implementation studies from both a structural (organizational structure and control mechanisms) and interpersonal process standpoint (emphasizing strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behaviors, diffusion perspectives, leadership and implementation style, communication and interaction processes). Noble (1999) add a third view – the individual-level processes view, emphasizing cognition, organizational roles and commitment besides the structural and interpersonal process view. Pettigrew (2014) grouped implementation variables into a larger number of categories, which are strategic content, context, process and strategic outcome.

Higgins (2005) establishes a "8'S" framework for strategy execution, which includes the structure of the strategy and its goals, resources, shared values, style, staff, systems and processes, and strategic performance. These elements are organized in a simple value chain model by the framework. Appropriate feedback systems, sufficient resources, good leadership and direction skills, motivation for all involved staff, communication and coordination, an appropriate company structure, and an appropriate company culture are among the seven factors identified by Qi (2005) as necessary for successful strategy implementation. These elements are organized in a simple value chain model by the framework.

In the view of Muller (2004) communication affects strategy execution directly through its effect on the individuals involved in execution, the resources required, the infrastructural orientation of the organization and the process of monitoring and evaluation among other key components.

According to Kraaijenbrink (2015), the most significant problems that organizations face during strategy execution are surprisingly stable over time, these problems in the past three decades boil down to a list of twenty. In this list “Unclear communication” and “No or insufficient communication” are identified as the top two key problems in strategy execution.

The focus of this research will be on the factor of communication which affect strategy implementation as categorized in studies of Okumus (2001, 2003).

#### **2.1.4 Communication**

Communication has been defined and explained in several ways by scholars of diverse interests and disciplines in management, psychology, and sociology. Communication touches every aspect of life including the personal, business, and social interactions. The Merriam Webster English Dictionary, defines communication as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.”

Ivancevich et al (2017) describes communication as the bond that keeps an organization and its members together and defines it as “as the transition of information and understanding through the use of common symbols from one person or group to another. The common symbols may be verbal or nonverbal” (2017, p.369). In view of Ivancevich et al., communication among members of an organization helps them “to develop long-range strategic plans, respond to changes in the organizational environment, manage internal talent, goals, and engage in virtually all organizationally relevant behaviors” (2017, p.367).

Communication within the organization becomes important to create a common understanding of the information presented to each other. According to Robbins and Judge (2012), communication is a transfer of meaning and understanding of meaning to others so that people who receive information understand the purpose of the information.

According to Greenberg (2011), communication can be interpreted as a process by which a person, group or organization transmits one type of information to another person, group or organization.

Considering the similarities in the definition of communication by different authors, communication can be regarded as a way of transferring information between people or group for mutual understanding, which involves the flow of information from the sender to the receiver. Communication entails the transmission of verbal and nonverbal messages via channel of communication from sender to receiver.

#### **2.1.4.1 Channels of Communication**

Communication channels are the means through which people in an organization communicate and interact with each other. According to Rao (2009), a communication channel is the route through which messages flow from the sender to the receiver. Based on formality, communication channels are categorized as Formal and Informal.

The formal communication channel is established by the management. It is deliberately created and officially blessed route for flow of communication between various positions in the organization. It is systematic, orderly in nature and supports the authority of superiors. (Rao, 2009 p.687). In such official channels, commands, instruction and orders travel downward; performance reports, grievances and suggestions travel upward; and coordination travels horizontally.

Formal communication includes exchange of information such as the policies and procedures of an organization, company business plans, strategic goals, annual reports, agreements, company-wide communications, and the like.

Informal communication channels are channels that do not adhere to the organization's hierarchy. Such channels exist outside the official network and develop because of spontaneous interaction between people working in an organization. Such channels are very loose, flexible and may take unpredictable routes.

#### **2.1.4.2 Types of Communication**

Based on the method used to communicate, there are three basic types of communications namely: verbal/oral, written and non-verbal communication (Ezezue, 2007:10). Verbal/oral Communication takes place mostly in a face – to – face conversation, group discussions and other circumstances in which the spoken word is used to transmit meaning between individuals. It can also be extended to the use of instrument/electronic devices such as telephone, video conferencing, web calling, online meetings and public address system. Studies have shown that oral communication is more effective than written communication in conveying feelings or in changing attitudes or beliefs.

Written Communication requires competence in writing and reading skills. In written communication, oral messages are translated into alphabetic symbols, words, and sentences. It includes letters, reports, e-mail, SMS, instant messaging (apps) and the like

Non Verbal Communication is communication without the use of words and letter symbols. Information and messages communicated non-verbally are neither written nor spoken instead; such messages are communicated through our physical environment, body movement, drawing and pictures including sign language.

### **2.1.4.3 Directions of Communication**

The communication process is all about how to send messages to a recipient of a message, while creating a meaningful equation between the sender and the recipient's information. This communication can flow vertically or sideways. The vertical dimension is divided into two directions, i.e. downwards and upwards (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Communication that flows from one level of a group or organization to a lower level is downward (Top – down) communication. This communication is used by leaders and group leaders to define goals, provide work instructions, inform employees about policies and procedures and indicate problems that require attention (Robbins & Judge, 2012). This communication is the most used channel in organizations. The basic problem of downward communications is being uni-directional communication, i.e. it does not provide feedback from workers to the next upper level in the hierarchy within the organization.

Upward communication model is used to provide upward (Bottom –Top) feedback. This model of communication makes managers to be aware of how employees perceive their work, their colleagues, and organizations in general. Managers also rely on this model of communication to get ideas for improvement. Workers use this channel of communication as an opportunity to express ideas and issues to escalate. Such communication helps workers to receive better responses to their problems and facilitate the flow of information from subordinates to superiors.

The lateral communication happens when communicating between members of the same workgroup, between members of other workgroups at the same level, between managers at the same level, or between staff who are in the same level horizontally. This communication scheme is created informally to by-pass the vertical hierarchy and speed up an action. It is also known

as transversal communication and focuses on the coordination of activities, problem solving, information sharing and conflict resolution.

Diagonal communication does not follow the rigid framework of superior or subordinate members within an organization. Modern management policies often involve diagonal communication where the communication flows between different levels of people and the information flows in all directions (Konar, 2022).

Unlike vertical and horizontal communication, which follows the chain of command in organizations, diagonal or crosswise communication is not affected by any lines of authority. In this mode, staff members from different departments, irrespective of their reporting relationships, interact with one another. For example, a junior staff from one department can interact with a senior staff from another department (Annan-Prah, 2015).

#### **2.1.5 Role of communication in strategy implementation**

Solomon (2017) after citing Beer and Eisenstat (2000) states that if there is no clear understanding of strategy, its execution will be a daunting task. Poorly communicating strategy to employees has a strong impact on strategy execution. Well-conceived strategy that is communicated to the organizational members equals a well-executed strategy. The knowledge of the strategy and understanding it are two different concepts. As such, for a strategy to be successfully executed these two concepts have to be integrated.

The success of the strategy implementation is dependent on effective communication. Employees have to be made aware of their role and responsibilities in the implementation of the organizational strategy; their deliverables must be made clear, as to what is expected of them to make the best of the strategy. In addition, the management must communicate the vision, goals and objectives to the employees (Mbaka & Mugambi 2014).

Kotter et al. (2010, pp.3-16) argue that in most organizations, leadership pursues organizational strategy implementation and do not realize the importance of the people element as a success factor for the strategy implementation. Consequently, this leads to failure of the change initiatives, as the strategy is being implemented by people who need to be made aware of the change, buy in to the change and understand their role in the strategy implementation. He further suggests that roles and responsibilities of these strategy implementers must be clearly defined

and explained by the management to general employees to ensure what is expected of them for the success of strategy implementation.

“Lack of communication leads to poor strategy implementation; information must be cascaded to all levels of staff from executive to low level employees. The management must engage with staffs, as effective communication creates a clear understanding of management expectations and will provide employees with clarity of the task to be performed and their timelines. Framework plans with deliverables and time-lines must be communicated and be monitored” Van Buul (2010, p.13). He further noted that communication creates a healthy working environment, builds confidence and trust, and will also motivate employees to work effectively and efficiently. It will also enable management to get feedback and monitor the implementation progress.

Leaders who communicate effectively not only clarify vision, mission and values clearly, but they also ensure that the execution process can be easier towards realizing the objectives (Andrew et al., 2011).

Nnamseh (2009, p.116) sees communication as the “means through which members of organization relate with one another by interchanging ideals, facts and feeling, through the use of words, letters, memoranda, symbols and bulletins”.

Every business will have different strategies due to varying industries, company sizes and goals, what they all have in common is the need to thoroughly communicate their business strategy to their employees (Hrebiniak, 2005). According to Guth and Macmillan effectively communicating the company business strategy to employees is vital in ensuring that each member of your staff is involved and understands the company goals, where your long-term plans will lead you in the future, and how you intend to get there (1986, pp. 313-327).

When employees understand their value and contributions to the greater business goal their work is supporting, they are going to be motivated to work hard toward their organization’s success (Pencheon et al., 2008). The most effective way of accomplishing this is through clearly and consistently communicating all aspects of the business strategy to everyone involved, resulting in a higher level of performance among teams companywide that leads to higher levels of success.

The common finding in the above studies is that communication and successful strategic plan implementation are inseparable. Behind every poor strategy implementation there exists lack of communication as one of the factors affecting the execution process. To this end, in order to attain organizational strategic objectives, there needs to be a clear communication among managers and their employees.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

### **2.2.1 Communication as a Strategy Implementation Factor**

Vigfússon, Jóhannsdóttir, and ÓLafsson (2021) examined empirical studies conducted from 1980 till 2020 to identify obstacles and success factors affecting strategy implementation. The study analyzed empirical researches done so far and identified 18 key success factors and 16 obstacles that can either positively or negatively affect strategy implementation. Vigfússon et al. (2021) identified factors that have dual nature, which contain both elements to hinder and or facilitate the success of strategy implementation. In this regard, communication is one of the dualistic factors identified in the research. This underlines the significance of frequent and clear communication and the impact of lack of communication in both the success and failure of strategy implementation.

Getachew (2017) studied the practices and challenges of strategy implementation at Ethiopian agricultural business corporation and observed that poor communication among others were the challenges faced in the strategy implementation.

Alamsjah (2011), after conducting research on eleven factors affecting successful implementation of strategy that have been well identified from previous research works, has found out a strong correlation between successful strategy execution and seven of the factors. Accordingly, communication was the third factor to have significant positive influence or to be highly correlated to successful strategy implementation. Alamsjah (2011) concludes that strategy execution will be more successfully when there is a shared understanding about how to do things within an organization (corporate culture support). The top management need to communicate clear strategy and direction to middle-level managers in order for them to translate it into clear execution plans.

The study of Schaap (2006), which was conducted in the casino industry within the state of Nevada, shows that over 38 percent of the senior-level leaders do not communicate the

company's direction and business strategy to all of their subordinates. Schaap (2006) citing Rapert et al (2000), stated that communication and shared understandings play a principal role in the implementation process (of strategy). In particular, when vertical communication is frequent, strategic consensus is enhanced and organization performance improves, as evidenced by higher levels of net operating income, gross revenues, and net revenues. The findings of Schaap's study, further reinforces the view of "effective communication up and down the organizational structure plays an important role in the strategy implementation process" (2006, p.23).

Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002), in their research of strategy implementation in 12 service organizations, showed that so much of strategy implementation problems are related to communication, as communication has effect on the creation of common understanding of a strategy. According to the findings of Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002), the communication of strategy in those examined 12 service firms was mostly linear and top-down communication. However, continuous two-way communication with feedback and possibility of commenting and questioning it, is important to understand and own the strategy. Fostering informal communication between superiors and subordinates, helps to have a common interpretation, acceptance and adoption of the strategy among working units (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002).

Lack of understanding of strategy was one of the obstacles of strategy implementation observed in the study by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002). The study showed that there were organizational members who typically recognized strategic issues as being important and also understood their content in generic terms, however the problem was while applying the strategic issues in their daily decision making. This is related to the linking of strategic issues to goals and objectives of organizational groups and units. Transforming the strategy into concrete objectives was generally observed as a challenge, this challenge gets tougher, when getting to the lower organizational level.

The study conducted by Peng and Litteljohn (2001) on three hotel chains and UK plcs, shows that in every aspect of strategy implementation there is communication. The study highlights that communication is interconnected to organizing processes, organizational context and implementation of objectives which, in turn, have an impact on strategy implementation process. Communication is embedded in the processes of organizing, affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of these processes and, in turn, the process of strategy implementation. Peng and

Litteljohn (2001), underline that effective communication is a basic necessity for effective strategy implementation but it does not ensure the effectiveness of implementation.

According to the case study in a Norwegian ferry-cruise company by Heide et al. (2002) it is examined that communication problems, that arise possibly due to lack of interaction and working as a team among the employees, were the major strategy implementation obstacles.

Rapert et al. (2002) identified that strong communication networks developed through formal and informal mechanisms within the firm help to bring strategic consensus within the firm. Accordingly, the organizations will benefit from enhanced strategic consensus expressed in terms of improved functional and organizational performance.

According to the research findings of Köseoglu et al. (2020) communication and people are the key factors to implement the strategy. The study also describes effective communication of strategies at the organizational level as an essential element to bring strategic consensus which is a critical success factor for strategy implementation.

As discussed above, studies from different part of the world provide an important understanding on the importance and direct relationship of employee communication and strategy implementation. The common finding is that clear communication positively affects the successful implementation of a strategy.

## **2.1 Hypothesis of the Study**

Hypothesis testing is used to explore a problem using several hypotheses (Sekaran, 2016). Hence, as per the literature review the researcher hypothesized the following proposition: -

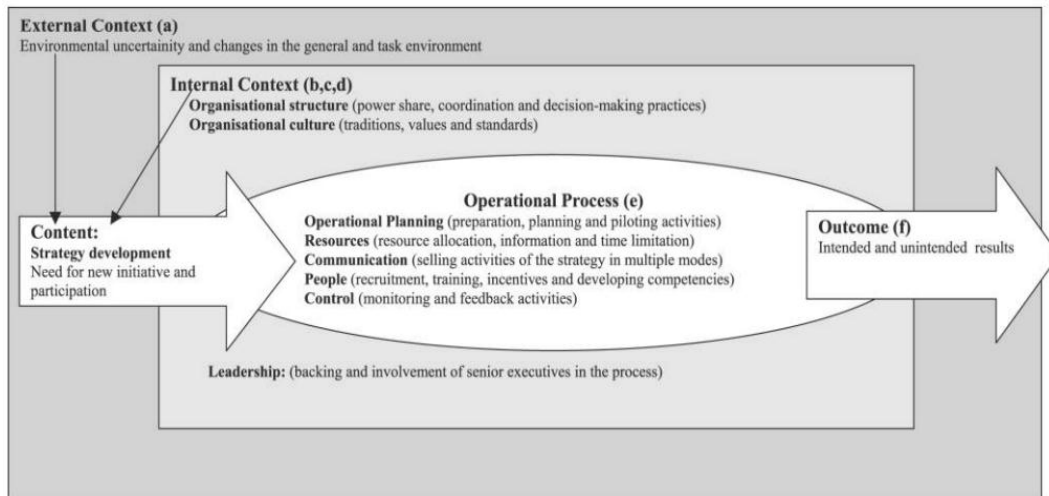
H<sub>1</sub>: Employee communication has positive significant relationship with strategy implementation in ethio telecom.

## **2.2 Conceptual framework**

Based on the general analysis of associated literatures conducted in this chapter, the following conceptual framework was developed. The model demonstrates that the independent variable is employee communication and the dependent variable strategy implementation. This helps to see what will happen to strategy implementation when the level of employee communication changes.

Strategy implementation framework of Okumus (2001) identified ten variables which have a direct impact on the strategy implementation process outcome. These variables are strategy development, organizational structure, environmental uncertainty, leadership, organizational culture, operational planning, resource allocation, communication, control people and the outcome. In (2003), Okumus enriched his (2001) framework and regrouped them into four categories of Content, Internal context, Operational Process and Outcome to produce an implementation model.

Based on this categorization Okumus (2003) proposed a conceptual framework to underline the interaction effect of the variables involved, shown in figure 2.1. In the framework, Okumus (2003) clarified that different implementation factors in the four categories should not be evaluated in isolation because a factor in one group can influence the other factors in the same and in other group.



- Key**
- a Changes in the external environment influence the strategic context and force organizations to deploy new initiatives.
  - b Problems and inconsistencies in the internal context require new initiatives.
  - c The strategy is implemented in the internal context, and the characteristics of organizational structure, culture and leadership influence the process factors.
  - d Having an organizational context that is receptive to change is essential for the successful implementation of strategy.
  - e The process factors are primarily used on a continuous basis to implement the strategy and manipulate the internal context.
  - f The characteristics of the context and process factors and how they are used directly influence the outcomes.

**Source:** Okumus (2003, p. 876)

**Figure 2.1:** Strategy implementation framework

Under this framework, communication is grouped under the operational process, to advocate activities of the strategy in multiple modes.

Strategy implementation is the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans (Noble, 1999). Noble’s Framework for Strategy Implementation constitutes four phases i.e., Pre-Implementation, Organizing Implementation, Managing Implementation and Sustaining Performance. In this model Noble (1999a) identified five managerial “levers” for strategy implementation. These levers are goals, organizational structure, leadership, communication and incentives.

Depending on the level of implementation stage communication plays a critical role in promoting regular communication, in creating understandings, to discuss and resolve implementation details, to update progresses on planned activities, to foster communication and buy-in among implementers.

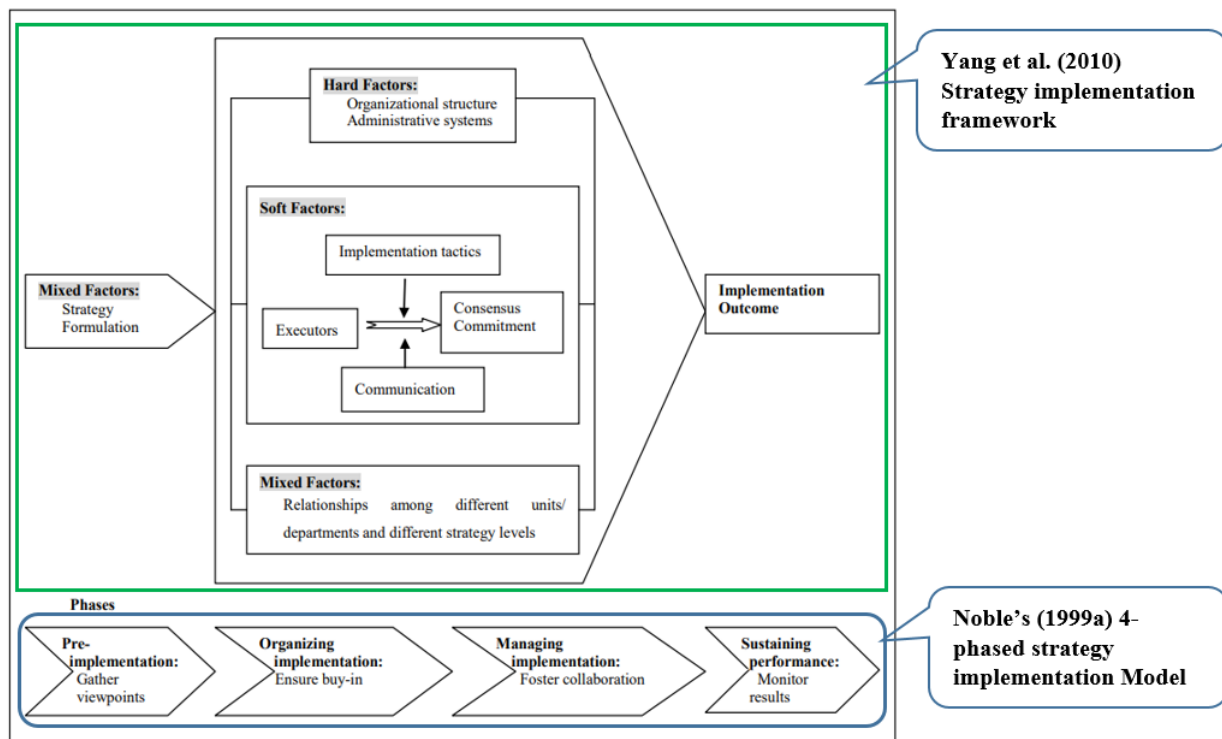
**Table 2.1:** Strategy implementation framework

Levers	Stages/ Phases			
	Pre- Implementation	Organizing the Implementation Effort	Managing the Implementation Process	Maximizing Cross- functional Performance
<b>Goals</b>	Ensure that all managers are aware of the strategic goals of the firm	Introduce goals of the strategy being implemented, incl. fit within firm’s broader strategic vision	Maintain the flexibility to adapt goals based on environmental changes	Develop and focus on common goals to encourage cross-functional cohesiveness
<b>Organizational structure</b>	Ensure that functional areas have the slack resources needed to be able to contribute to an implementation effort	Establish a formal implementation unit and ensure its visibility through the firm	Ensure equal representation by all affected functional areas	Temporarily suspend key implementation team members’ normal responsibilities to allow them to focus on the implementation effort
<b>Leadership</b>	Develop employee’s knowledge and appreciation of multiple functional areas	Establish a “ champion” who has both official cross-functional authority and general respect in the firm	Ensure that leaders show equal attention to all functional –level concerns	Balance visible and charismatic leadership with a maintenance of autonomy for functional-level implementation efforts
<b>Communications</b>	Maintain regular cross-functional communications to foster understanding and appreciation	Discuss and resolve implementation details early in the process	Update implementation team frequently on progress and changes in objectives	Communicate implementation progress across the entire organization to foster buy-in
<b>Incentives</b>	Reward the development of cross functional skills	Develop time and performance-based incentives for implementation team while lessening traditional functional	Adjust incentives as strategy and environmental conditions change during implementation	Establish visible and consistent cross-functional rewards for successful implementation efforts

**Source:** Noble (1999a)

After the review of research contexts, results, theoretical bases, methods used and analytical techniques of 60 literatures on strategy implementation Yang, Sun and Eppler (2010), identified nine factors that influence strategy implementation success. These nine factors are grouped into soft, hard, and mixed factors. Soft factors (or people-oriented factors) include the people or executors of the strategy, the communication activities (include content and style issues) as well as the closely related implementation tactics, the consensus about and commitment to the strategy, while the hard (or institutional) factors include the organizational structure, the administrative systems. The way in which the strategy was developed and articulated (strategy formulation) contains hard and soft factors alike and is thus considered a mixed factor (Yang et al., 2010 p. 11).

Yang et al (2008) summarized their review of factors influencing strategy implementation success and strategy implementation frameworks, into a framework that is based on the recognized nine factors depicted here below.



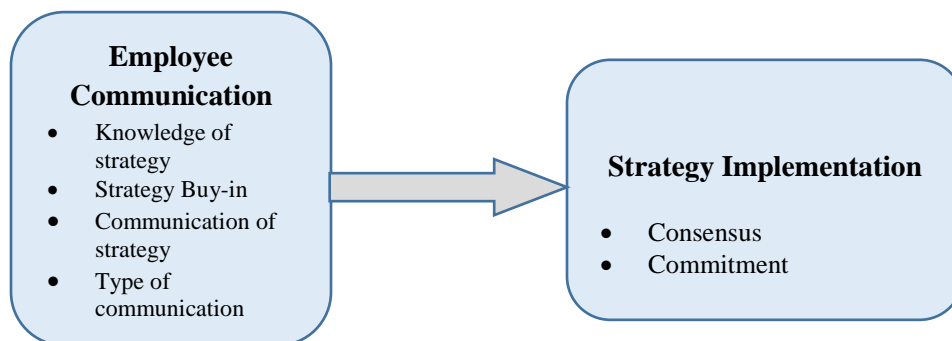
**Source:** Yang et al (2010, p. 38)

**Figure 2.2:** Strategy implementation framework

The strategic implementation framework proposal (Yang, Sun, Eppler, 2010) has included a 4-phase model (Noble, 1999a). The first phase is Pre-implementation where inputs were gathered from both internal and external environment of the organization. This is followed by Organizing to secure buy-in from organizational members. The Managing stage is collaboration among stakeholders and finally sustaining performance phase is to monitor result and propose course correction if needed.

Communication is the mechanism that sends formal and informal information about the strategy to ensure it is understood by the implementers. It includes communication of materials like operational plans, key performance indexes, goals and timelines. Such communications, which constitute the formal and informal channels, help to control operations, receive and give feedback allow the efforts and results of strategy implementation to be organized and managed according to the initial plan.

The study variables of employee communication and strategy implementation are better conceptualized by the modified framework which is adopted from Yang et al. (2010) framework that is based on Noble (1999) strategy implementation phases. As shown in figure 2.3, the hypothesized conceptual framework model shows the relationship between variables of employee communication (independent variable), and strategy implementation (dependent variable).



**Source:** Modified and adopted from Yang et al. (2010)

**Figure 2.3:** Conceptual Framework of the study

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the approach used to organize the research and the methods employed for gathering and analyzing data to answer the research questions stated in the introduction part of the research.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is a plan or strategy that is drawn up for organizing the research and making it practicable, so that research questions can be answered based on evidence and warrants (Cohen et al., 2017 p.173). The study used cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design was used to quantitatively analyze the relationship between the study variables of employee communication and strategy implementation and descriptive statistical analysis is employed to explain the type of communication used and to identify the influential mode of communication in strategy implementation the case of ethio telecom.

According to Creswell (2021), there are three basic research approach; quantitative, qualitative and mixed approach. According to Pilot and Hungler (2013), “quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables”. In quantitative research approach, variables are identified and defined, and then relevant data is collected from study participants. The advantage of this approach over qualitative approach is that the data is in numeric form, making it easier to interpret.

Hence, based on the research problem and objective to be addressed in this study, the quantitative research approach based on a cross-sectional survey was deployed.

#### 3.2 Target Population

The target population of the study was employees of ethio telecom working under corporate offices. These offices are broadly categorized as CEO Office, Commercial, Support and Technical divisions. There are a total of 22 divisions, under each division there are homogeneous groups based on their job positions, i.e., Staffs, Supervisors, Managers, Directors and Chief Officers. There were total of 6392 employees, of which the 22 were Chief Officers, 90 were

Directors, 334 were Manager, 655 Supervisors and the remaining 5293 were staffs in 2021/22 budget year.

### 3.3 Sample size and Sampling Techniques

Population of the study encompassed ethio telecom staffs working in corporate offices. The population size was 6392 employees, working under 22 divisions. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size calculation method with a 95 % confidence level and 0.05 precision levels the study sample became 376 employees (5 Directors, 20 Managers, 39 Supervisors and 312 Staffs).

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

N= is the population size , and

e = is the level of precision or sampling error

The allocation of study sample was done in proportion to the size of each homogeneous group under each division. Accordingly, the study used stratified random sampling technique, in order to accommodate the views of employees in all divisions, which constitutes a homogeneous group i.e., staffs, supervisors, managers and directors.

**Table 3.1:** Proportion of sample distribution

Name of Division	No. of Staffs	Sample proportion Per Job level				Sample Per Division
		Directors	Managers	Supervisors	Staffs	
Communication	78		1	1	3	5
Customer Experience and Quality Management	70				3	3
Customer Services	1908		1	12	99	112
Facility and Fleet	701		2	3	36	41
Finance	157	1	1	1	7	10
Fixed Network	389	1	1	4	18	24
Human Resources	155		1	1	7	9
Information Security	150	1	1	1	7	10
Information System	392	1	2	1	20	24
Infrastructure-Power and Environment	255		1	2	12	15

<b>Name of Division</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Sample proportion Per Job level</b>				<b>Sample</b>
Infrastructure-Transport Network	249		1	2	12	15
Internal Audit	72			1	3	4
International Business Operations	124		1	1	5	7
Legal Division	53				2	2
Marketing	99		1		5	6
Network Operation and Services Management	396		1	2	20	23
Physical Security	79			1	3	4
Sales	256	1	2	1	12	16
Strategic Planning and Program Management	47				2	2
Supply Chain	346		1	3	16	20
Telecom Excellence Academy	70		1		3	4
Wireless Network	346		1	2	17	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>6392</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>376</b>

### 3.4 Data Source and Collection Instruments

Both primary and secondary data sources was used to conduct this study. The primary data was collected from a self-administered structured containing close ended questions relating to the research questions. The questions in the questionnaire were partly adapted from organizational communication survey (Gubeladze, 2014) after some customization. The survey instrument contained closed ended questions with a five-point Likert response scale that ranged from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree”.

This data was used as the principal source of data for this study. The secondary data is collected from company financial recordings & annual and semi-annual performance reports, internal magazines of ethio telecom, e-sources, library books, journal articles, thesis and dissertations.

### 3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

This study summarized responses of the respondents by grouping similar responses together and avoid repetition and edit errors to cleanse collected data where possible. Both descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyze the collected data.

Both descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics helps to describe the characteristics of the variables of interest in the study (Kohtari, 2004). In the descriptive statistics frequency distribution, mean and standard deviations were used to describe the general information about the respondents' demographic information, to identify the type and the influential form of communication used in the implementation of a strategic plan.

For inferential statistics Pearson correlation and regression analysis were employed to test for correlation, and cause and effect relationships among variables of employee communication (independent variable) and strategy implementation (dependent variable) using SPSS.

### 3.6 Validity, and Reliability

#### 3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2004). Pilot test was conducted on 37 respondents and the feedbacks obtained from the pilot testing of the questionnaire were adopted before final distribution of the questionnaire to respondents.

#### 3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure to gauge the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Green, 2003). One of the internal consistency methods of assessing reliability, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient, was applied to check if it is proper to rely on the outcome of the questionnaire. This coefficient measures the extent to which an instrument yields consistent results and how well items in a set are related to one another. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.7 or above are acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

In this research, all variables have coefficients that meet the reliability requirement as computed and summarized in the table below.

**Table 3.2:** Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

<b>Variables of study</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
Type of Communication	.803	12
Influential Communication	.751	11
Employee Communication	.806	16

Strategy Implementation	.798	14
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Source: Own survey SPSS output (2022)

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations were considered during the research. As part of this, participants of the research were fully informed about the purpose of study being conducted and the relevant information was collected with full consent of participants without any coercion. Confidentiality of the data collected and anonymity of respondents was kept private. Participants of the survey were informed the data collected was to be used for academic purpose only. Finally, the results of the study will be communicated to interested participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter attempted to analyze, interpret and summarize the data collected. The results were made to relate to the key considerations discussed in the literature review sections. At the same time, the data was analyzed in association with the research questions raised in chapter one. Basically this study tried to identify the relationship among employee communication and strategy implementation. This chapter also focused on presentation, interpretation and discussion of data collected through surveys, which is analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis using SPSS V22.

#### 4.2 Sample and Response rate

For the purpose of this study, the researcher distributed 376 questionnaires to employee respondents (5 Directors, 20 Managers, 39 Supervisors and 312 Staffs) assuming to collect all of them filled. However, 47 questionnaires were not returned and among the responded 329 questionnaires, the 9 were rejected due to poor data quality. The remaining 320 valid questionnaires were sufficient with a response rate of 87.5%.

#### 4.3 Demographic Composition of Respondents

In this section of the analysis, the demographic data of respondents was duly analyzed using descriptive statistics which include the use of frequencies and percentages. Demographic variables such as Age, Gender and Education and Job position of respondents were analyzed.

**Table 4.1:** Analysis of Demographic Data

		Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Valid	Male	208	65.0	65.0	65.0
		Female	112	35.0	35.0	100.0
<b>Age (Years)</b>	Valid	20-30	58	18.1	18.1	18.1
		31-40	167	52.2	52.2	70.3
		41-50	78	24.4	24.4	94.7
		Above 50	17	5.3	5.3	100.0

		Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Education</b>	Valid	College Diploma	5	1.6	1.6	1.6
		BA/ BSc	196	61.3	61.3	62.8
		MA/ MSc	119	37.2	37.2	100.0
<b>Experience (Years)</b>	Valid	Less than 5	8	2.5	2.5	2.5
		6-10	135	42.2	42.2	44.7
		11-15	89	27.8	27.8	72.5
		Above 15	88	27.5	27.5	100.0
<b>Job Position</b>	Valid	Staff	266	83.1	83.1	83.1
		Supervisor	33	10.3	10.3	93.4
		Manager	16	5.0	5.0	98.4
		Director	5	1.6	1.6	100.0

**Source:** Own survey SPSS output (2022)

Out of the total 320 participants of the survey, close to two out of three respondents were males making 65% of the participants and the rest 35% were female. Nearly half of the participants (52.2%) were in the age range of 31- 40 years old, 18.1% of participants were in the age group of 20 - 30 years old, 24.4% were in the age group of 41 - 50 years old and the remaining 5.3 % respondents were above 50 years old.

With regard to educational level of participants, majority of the participants, 61.3%, were having a BA or BSc degree, on the other hand 37.2% were having Master's level education while quite small proportion (1.6%) of the respondents were having college diploma.

Based on their working experience most of the respondents (42.2%) have 6 – 10 years of experience and 27.8% of the participants were having 11 – 15 years of work experience. Respondents having above 15 years of experience makeup 27.5% of participants, while the remaining 2.5% are employees having less than 5 years of work experience.

The job position statistics of participants shows that vast majority (83.1%) are staffs and 10.3% of the respondents are supervisors. Managers and Directors constitute the remaining 5% and 1.6% of the participants respectively.

#### 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The descriptive statistics of the study variables were summarized and presented in Table 4.2 below revealing the mean and standard deviation of the variables.

**Table 4.2:** Summary of descriptive statistics of variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Type of Communication</b>	320	3.5612	.51688
<b>Influential Communication</b>	320	3.5869	.46186
<b>Employee Communication</b>	320	3.8922	.37185
<b>Strategy Implementation</b>	320	4.0853	.33958

**Source:** Own Survey SPSS output (2022)

The average score from the 5-point Likert scale with 5 referring Strongly Agree and 1 referring Strongly Disagree was computed for all the variables to show the proportion of the respondents that either strongly agreed or disagreed with the items of the variables. According to Creswell (2012), mean value measurement above 4.5 is Very High, 3.51 to 4.51 is considered High, 2.51 to 3.5 is Moderate, 1.51 to 2.5 is Low and less than 1.5 is deemed Very Low. Based on this mean score measurement interpretation, the researcher described the mean score of the participants for each categories of variable descriptions.

The results were interpreted by using the means and standard deviations of the study variables i.e., Type of communication, Influential mode of communication, Employee communication and Strategy implementation. Based on the result identification of type of communication (formal vs Informal; Written vs Oral; Vertical vs Horizontal), influential mode of communication for strategy implementation, the extent of Employee communication and Strategy Implementation was done.

##### 4.4.1 Type of Communication

Summary of responses of all the respondents to the questions on the type of communication used their respective work unit is summarized below. Analysis in this respect is helpful to identify gaps in communication flow and communication channels that are used for the dissemination of information for strategy implementation. It helps to review the employee communication method and enhance its contribution for the success of strategy implementation.

**Table 4.3** Descriptive statistics of “Type of Communication” variable

Code	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TC_1	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks, from my superior.	320	3.97	.731
TC_2	My strategy implementation progress reports are frequently passed on to my superiors.	320	3.58	1.023
TC_3	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks from my co-workers.	320	3.31	.964
TC_4	I send strategy implementation progress reports directly to members of the management (Manager/ Director/ Chief).	320	3.21	1.042
TC_5	I send strategy implementation progress reports to my immediate supervisor.	320	4.05	.871
TC_6	I share strategy implementation progress reports with my co-workers	320	3.78	.940
TC_7	I share strategy implementation progress reports with other Sections/ Departments	320	3.15	.934
TC_8	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through E-mail	320	4.45	.569
TC_9	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Phone calls	320	2.55	.978
TC_10	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Company publications/ reports/ newsletters	320	3.37	.944
TC_11	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Meetings	320	3.76	.806
TC_12	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Face to face interaction	320	3.58	1.100
<b>Type of Communication Overall mean</b>		320	3.56	.516
Valid N (List wise)		320		

**Source:** Own survey SPSS output (2022)

Mean value Legend:  $\geq 4.5$  = Very High, 3.51-4.51= High, 2.51-3.5= Moderate, 1.51-2.5= Low;  $< 1.5$ = Very Low (Creswell, 2012).

As indicated in the table 4.3 above, the responses given to questions to assess the type of communication used to disseminate strategy implementation information, show that all of the mean values are bigger than 2.5 indicating that there is a moderate to a high degree of agreement among the respondents on each item on type of communication used for strategy implementation.

With regard to communication flow, item lines TC\_5, TC\_1 and TC\_6 have the highest mean score values of 4.05, 3.97 and 3.78 with standard deviations of .871, .731 and .940 respectively.

**Table 4.4** Frequency table for item TC\_5

**TC\_5. I send strategy implementation progress reports to my immediate supervisor.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	14	4.4	4.4	6.9
	Neutral	23	7.2	7.2	14.1
	Agree	183	57.2	57.2	71.3
	Strongly Agree	92	28.8	28.8	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

**Table 4.5** Frequency table for item TC\_1

**TC\_1. I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks, from my superior.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	5.3
	Neutral	25	7.8	7.8	13.1
	Agree	225	70.3	70.3	83.4
	Strongly Agree	53	16.6	16.6	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

Eighty-six percent of the participants have rated agree or strongly agree that they send strategy implementation progress reports to their immediate supervisors. There is high level agreement among respondents with regard to this item (TC\_5) with mean score of 4.05 and SD of .871. In addition, most of the respondents have agreed that they get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks, from their superiors (TC\_1) with mean score 3.97 and SD .731. This indicates most of the communication of strategy implementation information flows vertically both downwards and upwards along the organizational hierarchy.

On the other hand, majority of the respondents have a moderate level of agreement on getting most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs etc. from co-workers (TC\_6) with a mean score of 3.31 and standard deviation of .964.

**Table 4.6** Frequency table for item TC\_6  
**TC\_6. I share strategy implementation progress reports with my co-workers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	4.1	4.1	4.1
	Disagree	16	5.0	5.0	9.1
	Neutral	59	18.4	18.4	27.5
	Agree	174	54.4	54.4	81.9
	Strongly Agree	58	18.1	18.1	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

As indicated in the above table, 72.5% of the survey participants have rated agree or strongly agree on sharing of strategy implementation progress reports with co-workers. Participants have high level of agreement with a mean value of 3.78 and SD of .940. This shows that there is considerable lateral flow of strategy implementation information horizontally among employees.

On the contrary, there is only a moderate level agreement on sharing strategy implementation progress with other Sections/ Departments (TC\_7) with a mean level of 3.15 and SD of .934. This implies that the diagonal communication flow across sections or departments is weak as compared to the vertical and lateral communication.

With respect to the use of communication channel for dissemination of strategy implementation information, as indicated in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8, Email and meetings are the channels mostly agreed by the participants.

**Table 4.7:** Frequency table for item TC\_8

**TC\_8. I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through E-mail**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	.9	.9	.9
	Neutral	3	.9	.9	1.9
	Agree	161	50.3	50.3	52.2
	Strongly Agree	153	47.8	47.8	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

Almost all of the respondents (98.1%) have rated beyond agree for the item “I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through E-mail”. The mean value of the item is 4.45 and its standard deviation is (SD) .569.

**Table 4.8** Frequency table for item TC\_11

**TC\_11. I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Meetings**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	30	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Neutral	62	19.4	19.4	28.7
	Agree	184	57.5	57.5	86.3
	Strongly Agree	44	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

According to the responses of the participants next to “Email”, Meetings were the communication channels used for the communication of strategy implementation information as there is a high level of agreement among respondents with mean score of 3.76 and standard

deviation of 0.806. Besides 57.5% the participants have Agree and 13.8% Strongly Agree on that they get most of the information about strategy implementation information through meetings.

On the other hand, there is only a moderate level agreement by majority of the participants on the use of telephone calls (item TC-9) as communication channel for transferring strategy implementation information. This is manifested by mean score of 2.55 and with SD of .978.

#### 4.4.2 Influential Communication

Table 4.9 Shows summary of responses of all participants to survey questions on the influential communication for strategy implementation. Analysis of the responses helps to identify the influential mode of communication in strategy implementation.

**Table 4.9** Descriptive statistics of “Influential communication” variable

Code	Item	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
IC_1	Most of the information I receive via Email is detailed and accurate.	320	4.04	.698
IC_2	Most of the information I receive from my manager is detailed and accurate.	320	3.99	.646
IC_3	Most of the information I receive from my co-workers is detailed and accurate.	320	3.48	.885
IC_4	Communication from other Sections/ Departments is typically detailed and accurate.	320	3.25	.791
IC_5	Most of the information passed down from higher-management is detailed and accurate.	320	3.43	.954
IC_6	The information I get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation	320	3.99	.845
IC_7	The information I get via company publications, reports and news letters are most important for strategy implementation	318	3.63	.805
IC_8	The information I get through telephone calls is most important for strategy implementation	320	2.77	1.060
IC_9	The information I get during meetings is most important for strategy implementation	320	3.70	.890
IC_10	In my Section/ Department/ Division the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy is more important for strategy implementation	320	4.07	.890
IC_11	In my Section/ Department/ Division informal communication is more important for strategy implementation	320	3.11	1.011
<b>Influential Communication Overall mean</b>		320	3.58	.461
Valid N (List wise)		320		

**Source:** Own survey SPSS output (2022)

Mean value Legend:  $\geq 4.5$  = Very High, 3.51-4.51= High, 2.51-3.5= Moderate, 1.51-2.5= Low;  $< 1.5$ = Very Low (Creswell, 2012).

The descriptive statistics of “Influential mode of communication” variable above shows that participants of the survey have a high degree of agreement on each of the eleven items.

Further analysis of the responses depicts that most of the respondents (86%) rated beyond agree and there is a high level of agreement on item IC\_1, that the information they receive via Email is detailed and accurate with mean value of 4.04 with standard deviation (SD) of .698.

**Table 4.10** Frequency table for item IC\_1

**IC\_1. Most of the information I receive via Email is detailed and accurate.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	.9	.9	.9
	Disagree	6	1.9	1.9	2.8
	Neutral	36	11.3	11.3	14.1
	Agree	206	64.4	64.4	78.4
	Strongly Agree	69	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

Nearly the same percentage (85%) of the participants agree or strongly agree on that the information they receive from their Manager is detailed and accurate (IC\_2), most of the respondents agree with mean score of 3.99 and SD .646. This indicates that a written information along the downward communication flow is detailed and accurate.

**Table 4.11** Frequency table for item IC\_2

**IC\_2. Most of the information I receive from my manager is detailed and accurate.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	10	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Neutral	38	11.9	11.9	15.0
	Agree	217	67.8	67.8	82.8
	Strongly Agree	55	17.2	17.2	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

Based on level of importance, most of the participants (77.5%) have rated agree or strongly agree for the item IC\_10 that the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy is more important for strategy implementation. Most of the respondents have a high level of agreement with a mean score of 4.07 and standard deviation of .89.

**Table 4.12:** Frequency table for item IC\_10

**IC\_10. In my Section/ Department/ Division the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy is more important for strategy implementation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	22	6.9	6.9	6.9
Neutral	50	15.6	15.6	22.5
Agree	132	41.3	41.3	63.8
Strongly Agree	116	36.3	36.3	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

On the other hand, the participants have a moderate level of agreement over (IC\_11) the importance informal communication for strategy implementation with mean score of 3.11 (SD=1.011).

According to responses to item IC\_6 “The information I get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation” there is a high level of agreement among the respondents with mean score values of 3.99 and SD of .845.

**Table 4.13:** Frequency table for item IC\_6

**IC\_6. The information I get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	3	.9	.9	.9
Disagree	16	5.0	5.0	5.9
Neutral	50	15.6	15.6	21.6
Agree	164	51.3	51.3	72.8
Strongly Agree	87	27.2	27.2	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

In order to identify the influential means of communication in strategy implementation the items, in the “Influential Communication” scale, were grouped in the categories of being “detailed and accurate”, level of “importance” and being “formal or informal”.

Accordingly, among the questions regarding level of detail and accuracy the communication means, IC\_1 “Most of the information I receive via Email is detailed and accurate.” has the biggest mean score value 4.04 (SD=.698).

Out of the questions concerning the level of importance of the communication means, IC\_6 “The information I get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation” has the biggest mean 3.99 (SD=.845) followed by IC\_9 “The information I get during meetings is most important for strategy implementation” with mean score of 3.70 (SD=.890).

Based on the formality of the communication means there is a high level of agreement among respondents that (IC\_10) the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy with mean value of 4.07 (SD=.890).

In other words, this can be rephrased as, formal information received through email is detailed, accurate and most important for strategy implementation followed by the information received during meeting sessions. Accordingly, information that goes through formal means along the organizational hierarchy, via email is more influential for strategy implementation.

#### 4.4.3 Employee Communication

Here below is summary of responses of all participants to survey items on Employee communication for strategy implementation. Analysis of the responses helps to review the existing employee communication put in place and identify the gaps in the process. This will be helpful in enhancing its role in the implementation of strategy.

**Table 4.14:** Descriptive statistics of “Employee Communication” variable

Code	Item	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
EC_1	Implementation progress of the strategic plan is communicated to all Departments/Section managers/ Staffs	320	3.83	.846
EC_2	Communication of the strategic plan and implementation progress is primarily limited to core personnel and/or senior executives.	320	2.98	.860

Code	Item	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
EC_3	Division level strategy is communicated so as to be aligned with Department/ Section plans and objectives.	320	3.91	.712
EC_4	There is a formal process to communicate and align organizational strategy with department/section plans and objectives.	320	3.84	.653
EC_5	Changes to a department's strategic plans initiate rapid notifications and discussions with other affected departments for the impact on their plans and objectives.	320	3.31	.785
EC_6	Departments/ Sections identify and report variations of key performance indexes of strategic activities and project deliverables to all members of the Section/ Department.	320	3.53	.779
EC_7	Department objectives, project deliverables and performance metrics are regularly checked and trigger revision of the strategic plan, and operational activity.	320	3.63	.753
EC_8	Ethio telecom's BRIDGE strategy is well communicated to all employees within my Section/ Department/ Division	320	4.04	.812
EC_9	The employee communication has created the understanding among employees, on how their work contributes to the achievement of ethio telecom's BRIDGE strategy	320	3.79	.805
EC_10	The employee communication has helped me to know my roles and responsibilities in the implementation of BRIDGE strategy	320	3.88	.779
EC_11	I know the strategic goals and objectives of my section/ Department/ Division	320	4.36	.576
EC_12	The employee communication has helped me to know my expected deliverables	320	4.03	.681
EC_13	I am aware of ethio telecom's Vision and Mission	320	4.48	.657
EC_14	I know my work helps the company meet its goals and objectives	320	4.60	.585
EC_15	I know the plan, deliverables and timelines of tasks to meet strategic goals	320	4.33	.601
EC_16	I get feedback and periodic implementation progress report on my Section's/ Department's/ Division's strategic plan	320	3.74	.796
<b>Employee Communication Overall mean</b>		320	3.89	.371
Valid N (List wise)		320		

Source: Own survey SPSS output (2022)

Mean value Legend:  $\geq 4.5$  = Very High, 3.51-4.51= High, 2.51-3.5= Moderate, 1.51-2.5= Low;  $< 1.5$ = Very Low (Creswell, 2012).

Regarding “Employee Communication” employees were asked sixteen questions; the highest mean score is 4.60 (SD=.585), that is for the question EC\_14 “I know my work helps the company meet its goals and objectives” and the lowest mean value is 2.98 with (SD=.860) for the item EC\_2 “Communication of the strategic plan and implementation progress is primarily limited to core personnel and/or senior executives.” Majority of respondents have moderately agreed with a mean 2.56 and standard deviation 0.83. There is a high level of agreement on the “Employee Communication” among most of the participants with overall mean score of 3.89 (SD=.371).

Participants of the survey have high level agreement on the question EC\_8 “Ethio telecom’s BRIDGE strategy is well communicated to all employees within my Section/ Department/ Division” with mean score of 4.04 (SD=.812). Similarly, the respondents highly agree on the questions of EC\_11 “I know the strategic goals and objectives of my section/ Department/ Division” with mean value 4.36 (SD=.576) and EC\_15 “I know the plan, deliverables and timelines of tasks to meet strategic goals” with mean score 4.33 (SD=.601). There is a mean score of 4.48 (SD=.657) for the item “I am aware of ethio telecom’s Vision and Mission”, interestingly most of the respondents have a high level agreement that the employee communication has helped them to know deliverables expected of them with mean value of 4.03 (SD=.681).

This indicates that the corporate level BRIDGE strategy along with vision and mission statements of ethio telecom are well known among employees. Employees do also know the strategic goals and objectives of their section/ department in addition they individually understand the plan, deliverables and timelines of tasks to meet strategic goals and more importantly they know what is expected of them to achieve those goals thanks to the employee communication within the organization.

#### **4.4.4 Strategy Implementation**

Table 4.15 shows summary of responses of respondents to survey questions on strategy implementation followed by analysis of the responses.

**Table 4.15:** Descriptive statistics of “Strategy Implementation” variable

Code	Item	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
SI_1	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy improves customer experience, ensures customer satisfaction and build strong and long-lasting relationship.	320	4.27	.621
SI_2	ethio telecom’s revenue and profitability increases upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy	320	4.16	.701
SI_3	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy helps to provide diversified telecom products portfolio for customers	320	4.18	.663
SI_4	ethio telecom becomes employee centered and a chosen employer upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy	320	3.50	.960
SI_5	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy brings operational excellence to ethio telecom	320	4.12	.584
SI_6	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy builds brand value and reputation for Ethio telecom	320	4.24	.606
SI_7	I fully agree with the rationale for the implementation of the BRIDGE strategic plan	320	4.06	.592
SI_8	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of ethio telecom’s business	320	4.25	.455
SI_9	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of my section/ Department/ Division	320	4.10	.497
SI_10	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of myself	320	4.01	.616
SI_11	I have the necessary tools and equipment to do my job in the implementation of BRIDGE strategy.	320	3.79	.768
SI_12	I am willing to hold myself and my team accountable for full implementation of the strategy	320	4.33	.508
SI_13	I am willing to put effort beyond that’s normally expected of me in order to meet ethio telecom’s strategic goals.	320	4.34	.570
SI_14	I feel that the BRIDGE strategic plan is implementable in ethio telecom’s corporate culture.	320	3.86	.748
<b>Strategy Implementation Overall mean</b>		320	4.08	.339
Valid N (List wise)		320		

**Source:** Own survey SPSS output (2022)

Mean value Legend:  $\geq 4.5$  = Very High, 3.51-4.51= High, 2.51-3.5= Moderate, 1.51-2.5= Low;  $< 1.5$ = Very Low (Creswell, 2012).

Employees were asked fourteen questions concerning strategy implementation and accordingly the highest mean of the responses was 4.34 (SD=.570) for the question “I am willing to put effort beyond that’s normally expected of me in order to meet ethio telecom’s strategic goals”. This implies that there is a high level of will among employees to put extra effort to realize the strategic goals of the company, this is indeed a great deal of potential for strategy implementation.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score was 3.50 (SD=.960) for the item SI\_4 “ethio telecom becomes employee centered and a chosen employer upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy”. Among the participants of the study 1.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 12.2% disagreed that ethio telecom will become employee centered and preferred employer. When considering the overall responses for the item SI\_4, there is a moderate level of agreement among respondents that ethio telecom becomes employee centric and preferred employer by employees.

**Table 4.16:** Frequency table for item SI\_4

**SI\_4. ethio telecom becomes employee centered and a chosen employer upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disagree	39	12.2	12.2	13.4
Neutral	127	39.7	39.7	53.1
Agree	94	29.4	29.4	82.5
Strongly Agree	56	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

Majority of the participants believe that (SI\_8) it is necessary to execute the BRIDGE strategy for the good of ethio telecom’s business (mean score of 4.25 (SD=.455)), (SI\_9) for the good of their section/ Department/ Division (mean score of 4.10 (SD=.497)) and (SI\_10) for the good of themselves (mean score of 4.01 (SD=.616)).

With regard to benefits of implementing BIRDGE strategy most of the respondents have a high level of agreement that the (SI\_1) implementation of BRIDGE strategy improves customer experience, ensures customer satisfaction and build strong and long-lasting relationship (mean score of 4.27 (SD=.621)), (SI\_6) the implementation of BRIDGE strategy builds brand value and reputation for Ethio telecom (mean score of 4.24 (SD=.606)), (SI\_3) the implementation of BRIDGE strategy helps to provide diversified telecom products portfolio for customers (mean score of 4.18 (SD=.663)), (SI\_2) ethio telecom’s revenue and profitability increases upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy (mean score of 4.16 (SD=.701)), (SI\_5) the implementation of BRIDGE strategy brings operational excellence to ethio telecom (mean score of 4.12 (SD=.584)).

Most of the respondents have also high level agreement with item SI\_7 which states “I fully agree with the rationale for the implementation of the BRIDGE strategic plan” with mean score of 4.06 (SD=.592). In addition, for the question “I feel that the BRIDGE strategic plan is implementable in ethio telecom’s corporate culture.” (SI\_14) there is high agreement with mean value of 3.86 (SD=.748). In their response for item SI\_11 “I have the necessary tools and equipment to do my job in the implementation of BRIDGE strategy.” 62.8% of the respondents rated Agree and 12.2% of them responded Strongly Agree. The mean score of this item is 3.79 (SD=.768).

**Table 4.17:** Frequency table for item SI\_11

**SI\_11. I have the necessary tools and equipment to do my job in the implementation of BRIDGE strategy.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disagree	17	5.3	5.3	6.6
Neutral	59	18.4	18.4	25.0
Agree	201	62.8	62.8	87.8
Strongly Agree	39	12.2	12.2	100.0
Total	320	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

In a nut shell this indicates that there is high level common agreement (consensus) among participants on the rationale of BRIDGE strategy, availability of favorable corporate culture, accessibility of tools and equipment for the implementation and finally the benefits of implementing BRIDGE strategy.

#### 4.5 Reliability

Reliability is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the “goodness” of a measure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In conducting the reliability test, the researcher retrieved Cronbach’s alpha values using SPSS for the items in each variable as indicated in Table 4.18. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test is based on the average correlation of items in the measurement scale. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with an  $\alpha = 0.7$  or greater considered as sufficiently reliable (Bonett & Wright, 2015).

**Table 4.18:** Reliability Analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha)

Variables of study	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Type of Communication	.803	12
Influential Communication	.751	11
Employee Communication	.806	16
Strategy Implementation	.798	14

Source: Own survey SPSS output (2022)

As indicated in Table 4.18, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of Type of Communication, Influential Communication, Employee Communication and Strategy Implementation is 0.803, 0.751, 0.806 and 0.798 respectively. Since all of the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were greater than 0.7, the reliability of the measures used in this study can be considered as good and acceptable.

#### 4.6 Correlation Analysis

The purpose of correlation analysis is to explore the strength as well as the direction of the relationship among the study variables namely Employee communication and Strategy Implementation. Pearson’s correlation values indicate both the direction and size of the relationship. A negative (-) value denotes a negative relationship on the scatter gram and a positive (+) value denotes a positive relationship on the scatter gram (Dennis & Duncan, 2000).

Stronger relationships between variables are represented by larger numerical values. According to Cohen (1988), coefficient of correlation (r) stretching from 0.10 to 0.29 may be considered as showing a low level of relationship, coefficient of correlation (r) stretching from 0.30 to 0.49 may be considered as a modest level of relationship, coefficient of correlation (r) extending from 0.50 to 1.00 may be considered as a high level of /relationship.

As indicated in the Table 4.19 below, correlation matrix showed positive relationships between each of the independent variables Employee communication and Strategy Implementation.

**Table 4.19:** Pearson Correlation Matrix

		Employee Communication	Strategy Implementation
Employee Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.348**	1

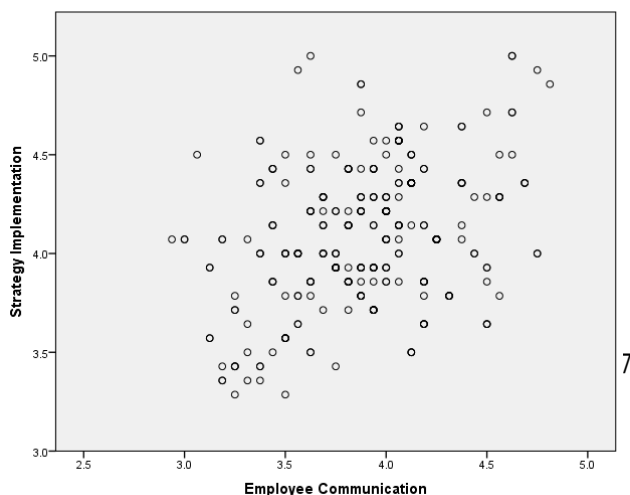
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=230

**Source:** Own survey SPSS output (2022)

As depicted in Table 4.19 above, Employee Communication was positively and significantly correlated with Strategy Implementation (R =0.348, p-value of 0.01).

#### 4.7 Test for Assumptions of Classical Linear Regression Model

To verify the assumptions of classical linear regression model and protect against the chance of getting and interpreting wrong regression results, the researcher conducted a diagnostic test prior to running the regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. Therefore, a preliminary analysis (Regression Diagnostics) like linearity, normality, heteroscedasticity, and test for autocorrelation was conducted to make sure that the model is unbiased, consistent, efficient and valid.



##### 4.7.1 Test for Linearity

The relationship between the dependent variables and explanatory variables need to be linear function to conduct linear regression analysis (Darlington, 1978). Therefore, the

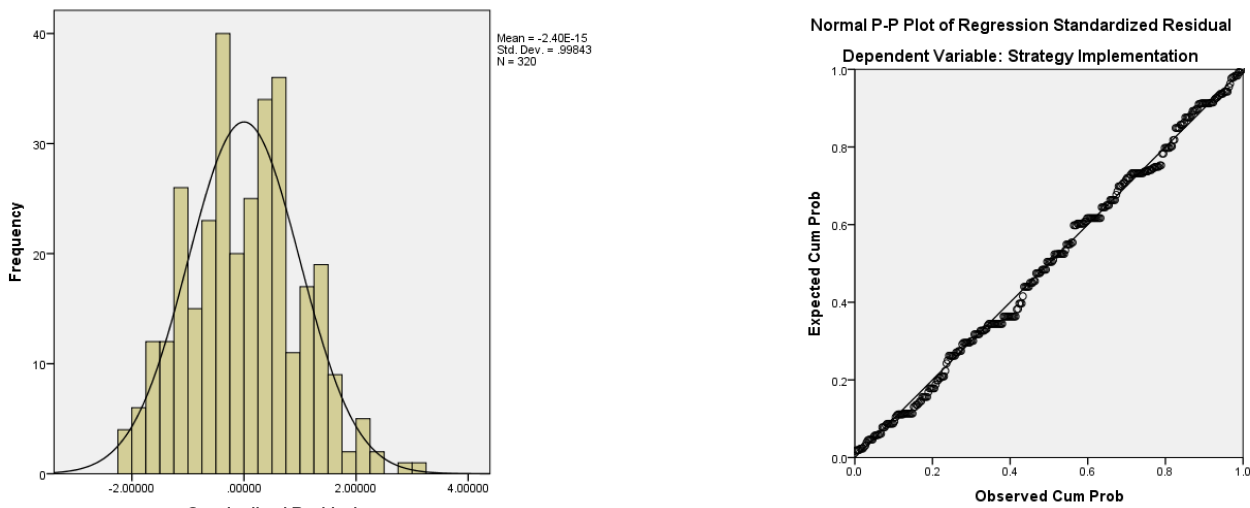
linearity of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables was checked using scatter plots of the regression residuals for the model through SPSS software.

**Figure 4.1:** Linearity test graph  
Source: Own survey data output (2022)

The scatter plot indicates that the points lie in a reasonably straight line from bottom left to top right. Therefore, we can conclude that the assumption of linearity was not violated. **k**

#### 4.7.2 Test for Normality

Classical Linear Regression Model assumes that the distribution of the error term is normally distributed. This test was used to determine whether the error term is normally distributed. The frequency distribution of the standardized residuals was compared to a normal distribution. The



assumption was also tested by using normal probability plot (NPP). If the fitted line in the NPP is

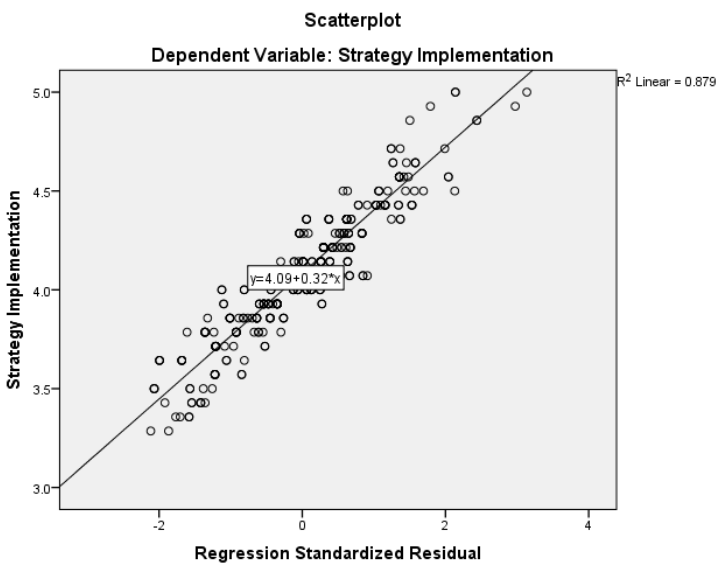
**Figure 4.2:** Normality test plots  
Source: Own survey data output (2022)

approximately a straight line, it is an indication that variables of interest are normally distributed (Gujarati, 2004). The result shows that residuals of the model were approximately normally

distributed as the fitted line on the NPP is close to a straight line. Thus, we can deduce that the assumption of “normally distributed error term” is not violated.

### 4.7.3 Test for Homoscedasticity

Classical Linear Regression Model assumes the variance of the error term is constant, this is known as homoscedasticity. If the variance of the error term is not the same, they are said to be heteroscedastic. The standard suggestion for examining the assumption of heteroscedasticity in regression analysis is to plot the predicted variable values against the residual values. Heteroscedasticity is indicated when these values spread or fan out.



**Figure 4.3:** Test of Homoscedasticity

**Source:** Own survey data output (2022)

As illustrated in the Figure 4.3, the error or distance between the fit line and predicts dots remains consistent which indicates that homoscedasticity assumption was not violated.

### 4.7.4 Test for Autocorrelation

Classical Linear Regression Model assumes there is no serial correlation among error terms. The researcher applied Durbin Watson test, which is most commonly used techniques of detecting autocorrelation. If the value of DW test is between 1.5 and 2.5 there is no evidence for the presence of serial correlation among error terms (Hassen et al, 2017). Therefore, the DW test

value is 1.792 (see Table 4.20) which falls in the acceptable range. This implies absence of serial correlation among errors.

#### **4.8 Standard Regression**

The researcher applied standard regression to explore the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The coefficients of determination (R square value), the regression coefficients (Beta coefficient) and the p-values for each of the relationships were reported.

#### 4.8.1 Regression model specification

##### Model

$$SI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EC + \varepsilon$$

Where: SI = Strategy Implementation, EC = Employee Communication,  $\beta_0$  = intercept of Strategy Implementation,  $\beta_1$  = Employee Communication Coefficient,  $\varepsilon$  = the random error.

##### Model Summary

As presented in model summary Table 4.20 below, R-square value was 0.121. This explain that, Employee Communication can determine about 12.1% of the variation that can exist on Strategy implementation. The proposed hypothesis was empirically tested and discussed.

The model summary Table 4.20 below shows that the independent variable employee communication statistically predicted strategy implementation in ethio telecom. From this finding the R is equal to 0.348 which infers that the presence of modest correlation between employee communication and strategy implementation. The R Square value .121 indicates that employee communication explains 12.1% of the variations in strategy implementation.

**Table 4.20:** Regression analysis model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.348 <sup>a</sup>	.121	.119	.3188	1.792

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Communication

b. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation

Source: Own survey data output (2022)

#### 4.8.2 Coefficients of Variables

**Table 4.21:** Coefficients of variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.847	.188		15.168	.000
	Employee Communication	.318	.048	.348	6.629	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation

Source: Own survey data output (2022)

$$SI = 2.847 + 0.348EC$$

Where: SI = Strategy Implementation, EC = Employee Communication

Standardized regression coefficient (beta) coefficient shows the strength of effect of the independent variables (Employee communication) on the dependent variable (Strategy implementation). The regression coefficient result of the Model shows that (see table 4.22), employee communication has positive and statistically significant effect on strategy implementation ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

#### **4.9 Results and Hypothesis testing**

The research hypothesis  $H_1$  stated that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between employee communication and strategy implementation in ethio telecom. The result of regression analysis, as illustrated in table 4.22, revealed that employee communication has positive and statistically significant relationship with strategy implementation ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This implies that, if the mean score value of employee communication increases by 1 unit, on average the mean score value of strategy implementation increases by 0.348 unit and statistically significant at 5% significance level. Therefore; the finding is in support of the hypothesis; that means employee communication has a positive and statistically significant relationship with strategy implementation.

#### **4.10 Discussion**

The study result indicated that the effect of employee communication on strategy implementation is positive and statistically significant. This indicates that as the level of employee communication increases it leads to corresponding increase in successful strategy implementation.

The research hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stated that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between employee communication and strategy implementation. Thus, the finding of the current study also supported the hypothesis. It is, therefore, in agreement with the findings of Alamsjah (2011), who found out that there is a strong significant positive correlation between successful strategy execution and communication.

This is also consistent with Ishaq et.al (2018) who found out that there was a positive and significant relationship between communication and Strategy Implementation ( $R = 0.617$ ,

p=0.000). Further EKeowa and Iloafu (2016) proved that there is a positive correlation between effective communication and achievement of organizational goal ( $R=.84$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Njeri and Rugami (2016) also found out that leadership communication and strategy implementation were positively and significantly related with marginal correlation ( $R=0.276$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Also the findings of Peng and Litteljohn (2001) show that effective communication is a key requirement for effective strategy implementation besides it plays an important role in knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation.

With regard to the type of employee communication used in strategy implementation, the study result showed that there is high level agreement among most of the respondents with regard to communicating strategy implementation progress reports to their immediate supervisors with mean score of 4.05 ( $SD=.871$ ). In addition, majority of the respondents have agreed that they get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks, from their superiors with mean score 3.97 ( $SD=.731$ ). This indicates that vertical communication flow (Upward and Downward) is widely used for communicating strategy implementation information.

On the other hand, significant proportion of the respondents have a moderate level of agreement on getting most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs etc. from co-workers with a mean value of 3.31 ( $SD=.964$ ).

On the contrary, there is only a moderate level agreement is observed on sharing strategy implementation progress with other Sections/ Departments with a mean value of 3.15 ( $SD=.934$ ), this indicates that the diagonal communication flow across sections or departments is weak as compared to the vertical and lateral communication.

Among the communication patterns Downward, Upward and Horizontal are prominent over diagonal communication flow for communicating strategy implementation information. Yet again, among the remaining three communication flow directions the horizontal direction has the smallest mean score, indicating the horizontal communication flow is used less often for communication of strategy implementation information as compared to vertical information flow. Robbins and Judge (2012) state the downward communication flows are used to assign

goals and objective of an organization and the upward is to report progress towards the implementation of goals, which is consistent with the study result.

With respect to the use of communication channel for dissemination of strategy implementation information, the study found out that Email followed by meeting sessions were the communication channels mostly used by participants with mean scores of 4.45 (SD=.569) and 3.76 (SD=0.806) respectively.

With regard to Influential communication in strategy implementation, which is identified on the bases of the level of detail & accuracy, level of importance and formality, vast majority of the respondents agreed that most of the information they receive via Email is detailed and accurate with mean score value 4.04 (SD=.698). Based on the level of importance of the communication means, majority of the participants agreed that the information they get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation with mean value of 3.99 (SD=.845) followed by IC\_9 “The information I get during meetings is most important for strategy implementation” with mean score of 3.70 (SD=.890). Based on the formality of the communication means there is a high level of agreement among respondents that (IC\_10) the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy is more important for strategy implementation with mean value 4.07 (SD=.890).

The study showed that influential communication in strategy implementation is the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy received through email, followed by the information received during meeting sessions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents findings, conclusion on the basis of the study result and relevant recommendations for action based on objectives of the study mentioned in Chapter One.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The objectives of this study was to determine to investigate the relationship between employee communication and the implementation of a strategy, to identify the types of communication used in strategy implementation and to investigate the type of communication which has more influence on strategy implementation. Based on the objectives and hypotheses of the study, questionnaire was developed partly adopted from existing sources with some modifications to measure the research variables. The collected data was analyzed using statistical package for social science software (SPSS) V22.0

The study revealed the type of communication used in strategy implementation. Accordingly, a vertical communication flow (Upward and Downward) through the communication channels of email and followed by meeting sessions were widely used for communicating strategy implementation information.

The descriptive statistics of the “Influential communication” variable showed that the communication that goes through formal way along the organizational hierarchy and via email is more influential for strategy implementation.

A regression analysis was employed for research hypotheses testing. The research hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stated that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between employee communication and strategy implementation. Thus, the finding of the study also supported the hypothesis. Employee communication and strategy were correlated with ( $R= 0.348$ ). As the finding indicated  $R$  is equal to 0.348 which inferred that the presence of modest correlation between the independent variables and dependent variable and  $R$  Square is 0.121 which indicated that employee communication explains 12.1% of the variations in strategy implementation.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study the researcher has made the following conclusions.

Strategy implementation is positively related with employee communication. This implies that strategy implementation success will increase as the level of employee communication increases. Thus employee communication should be an integral part of strategy implementation because it positively helps to enhance the realization of organizational strategic goals and objectives.

The vertical communication flow (Upward and Downward) was widely used for communicating strategy implementation information. Email followed by meeting sessions were the communication channels mostly used for dissemination of strategy implementation information in the case of ethio telecom.

The formal communication of information along the organizational hierarchy received via e-mail (written) followed by meeting sessions is the influential type of communication for strategy implementation in the case of ethio telecom.

## **5.3 Recommendation**

After due consideration of the research finding and conclusion made thereof, the following recommendation are provided:

- Downward, upward flow of information is widely used for communicating strategy implementation information. Directors, Managers and staffs in Ethio telecom are advised to improve the use of diagonal flow of information to further enhance easier and quicker flow of strategy implementation information.
- Formal written communication was found to be the influential communication in the study, however strictly adhering to the formal vertical structure for all communications could be inefficient, as a result informal communication occurring with management's knowledge and support needs to be encouraged for the communication of strategy implementation information.
- Horizontal information flow helps to short-circuit the vertical hierarchy and expedite action. Hence ethio telecom's management has to further increase the relatively weaker use of the lateral communication for exchange of strategy implementation information.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

### EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION ON STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF ETHIO TELECOM

**Dear Respondent,**

This questionnaire is designed to get the relevant information for the study of the *effect of communication on strategic plan implementation in the case of ethio telecom*. This study is conducted for academic purpose only. Your answers will be completely anonymous, hence please put your genuine views as it determines the soundness and the validity of the findings of the research. Therefore, I kindly request you to fill the questionnaire frankly. Thank you!

**Instructions: -**

The researcher uses this questionnaire as data collection tool, your genuine response is highly decisive for the success of this study. Therefore, please

- ✓ Reflect your genuine views
- ✓ Put the (✓) mark in space provided for your response
- ✓ No need to write your name.

For any questions and clarifications, do not hesitate to contact the researcher through the following addresses:

**Email:** [muhaba.h@gmail.com](mailto:muhaba.h@gmail.com)

**Mobile:** +251911501090

**Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation!!**



	<b>Type of Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	members of the management (Manager/ Director/ Chief).					
<b>TC_5</b>	I send strategy implementation progress reports to my immediate supervisor.					
<b>TC_6</b>	I share strategy implementation progress reports with my co-workers					
<b>TC_7</b>	I share strategy implementation progress reports with other Sections/ Departments					
<b>TC_8</b>	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through E-mail					
<b>TC_9</b>	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Phone calls					
<b>TC_10</b>	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Company publications/ reports/ newsletters					
<b>TC_11</b>	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Meetings					
<b>TC_12</b>	I get most of the information about strategic objectives, plans, KPIs, reports and implementation feedbacks through Face to face interaction					

**PART C: INFLUENTIAL MODE OF COMMUNICATION IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

Kindly indicate the extent of influence each communication means has on strategy implementation in the case of your Division/Department or Section.

Rate the extent to which you agree/disagree on the statement by putting “√” on a scale of 1-5 where: 1= **Strongly Disagree**, 2= **Disagree**, 3= **Neutral**, 4= **Agree**, 5= **Strongly Agree**.

	<b>INFLUENTIAL COMMUNICATION IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IC_1</b>	Most of the information I receive via Email is detailed and accurate.					

	<b>INFLUENCIAL COMMUNIAION IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IC_2</b>	Most of the information I receive face to face from my manager is detailed and accurate.					
<b>IC_3</b>	Most of the information I receive from my co-workers is detailed and accurate.					
<b>IC_4</b>	Communication from other Sections/ Departments is typically detailed and accurate.					
<b>IC_5</b>	Most of the information passed down from higher-management is detailed and accurate.					
<b>IC_6</b>	The information I get through E-mail is most important for strategy implementation					
<b>IC_7</b>	The information I get via company publications, reports and news letters are most important for strategy implementation					
<b>IC_8</b>	The information I get through telephone calls is most important for strategy implementation					
<b>IC_9</b>	The information I get during meetings is most important for strategy implementation					
<b>IC_10</b>	In my Section/ Department/ Division the formal communication along the organizational hierarchy is more important for strategy implementation					
<b>IC_11</b>	In my Section/ Department/ Division informal communication is more important for strategy implementation					

**PART D: ROLE OF COMMUNIAION IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

The tables here below list questions about employee communication and strategy implementation. Please rate the extent to which you agree/disagree on the statement by putting “√” on a scale of 1-5 where: 1= **Strongly Disagree**, 2= **Disagree**, 3= **Neutral**, 4= **Agree**, 5= **Strongly Agree**.

	<b>Employee Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EC_1</b>	Strategic plans are deployed and implementation progress is communicated to all Department/Section managers/ Staffs					
<b>EC_2</b>	Communication of the strategic plan and implementation progress is primarily limited to core personnel and/or senior executives.					
<b>EC_3</b>	Division level strategy is communicated so as to be aligned with Department/ Section plans and objectives.					
<b>EC_4</b>	There is a formal process to communicate and align organizational strategy with department/section plans and objectives.					
<b>EC_5</b>	Changes to department strategic plans initiate rapid notifications and discussions with other affected departments for the impact on their plans and objectives.					
<b>EC_6</b>	Departments/ Sections identify and report variations of key performance indexes of strategic activities and project deliverables to all members of the Section/ Department.					
<b>EC_7</b>	Department objectives, project deliverables and performance metrics are regularly checked, leading to strategic plan, and operational activity discussion and refinement.					
<b>EC_8</b>	Ethio telecom’s BRIDGE strategy is well communicated to all employees within my Section/ Department/ Division					

	<b>Employee Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EC_9</b>	The employee communication has created the understanding among employees, on how their work contributes to the achievement of ethio telecom's BRIDGE strategy					
<b>EC_10</b>	The employee communication has helped me to know my roles and responsibilities in the implementation of BRIGE strategy					
<b>EC_11</b>	I know the strategic goals and objectives of my section/ Department/ Division					
<b>EC_12</b>	The employee communication has helped me to know my expected deliverables					
<b>EC_13</b>	I am aware of ethio telecom's Vision and Mission					
<b>EC_14</b>	I know my work helps the company meet its goals and objectives					
<b>EC_15</b>	I know the plan, deliverables and timelines of tasks to meet strategic goals					
<b>EC_16</b>	I get feedback and periodic implementation progress report on my Section's/ Department's/ Division's strategic plan					

	<b>Strategy Implementation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SI_1</b>	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy improves customer experience, ensures customer satisfaction and build strong and long-lasting relationship.					
<b>SI_2</b>	ethio telecom's revenue and profitability increases upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy					
<b>SI_3</b>	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy helps to provide diversified telecom products portfolio for customers					
<b>SI_4</b>	ethio telecom becomes employee centered and a chosen employer upon the implementation of BRIDGE strategy					
<b>SI_5</b>	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy brings operational excellence to ethio telecom					
<b>SI_6</b>	The implementation of BRIDGE strategy builds brand value and reputation for Ethio telecom					
<b>SI_7</b>	I fully agree with the rationale for the implementation of the BRIDGE strategic plan					
<b>SI_8</b>	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of ethio telecom's business					
<b>SI_9</b>	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of my section/ Department/ Division					
<b>SI_10</b>	I believe in the necessity of executing the BRIDGE strategy for the good of myself					
<b>SI_11</b>	I have the necessary tools and equipment to do my job in the implementation of BRIDGE strategy.					
<b>SI_12</b>	I am willing to hold myself and my team accountable for full implementation of the strategy					
<b>SI_13</b>	I am willing to put effort beyond that's normally expected of me in order to meet ethio telecom's					

	strategic goals.					
<b>SI_14</b>	I feel that the BRIDGE strategic plan is implementable in ethio telecom's corporate culture.					